

Statement on the Bologna Process

The undersigned national unions of students, representing students in all Nordic and Baltic countries, welcome the continuation of the Bologna Process. Many things have improved but still challenges remain in order to reach the European Higher Education Area based on transparency, comparability, cooperation, diversity, intercultural dialogue and social mobility. The Bologna Process must be rooted on democracy, stakeholder participation and institutional autonomy in the sense of academic freedom. Therefore the unions emphasize the need of implementation of the following original aims of the Bologna Process:

Mobility

Mobility should be diverse, equally accessible to both all students and staff. Mobility should not be restricted to mobility across borders. Mobility is also about the opportunity to shift between institutions and disciplines, in order to create a personalized learning path. The institutions have the responsibility to facilitate this kind of mobility which will benefit both students, staff as well as the institutions.

One should seek to facilitate mobility with more focus on academic outcome in addition to language and cultural skills. This should make it easier to make study activities taken abroad an integrated and recognized part of a degree.

The unions call for a further development of broad student recruitment and social mobility in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The Nordic and Baltic countries should be a primus motor in developing the social dimension of the Bologna process.

Student centered learning

Higher education institutions must have clearly stated learning outcomes for their study programs, units and courses. The learning outcomes must be based on the overall profile of the degree and linked to the appropriate levels of the qualifications framework. The required workload of the student must be fairly calculated and expressed through ECTS. The teaching-, learning- and assessment methods must be linked to the learning outcomes, elaborated, explained and available to the students and stakeholders. This is not a reality in the higher education system today, but this paradigm shift is essential and institutions should implement learning settings that put students in the centre.

Lifelong learning and recognition of prior learning

Lifelong learning is not, and should not be, a moneymaking machine for the higher education institutions but should give the people the opportunity to obtain new competences, at any stage in life, which will enable them to participate in society.

To facilitate access and progression, institutions should establish clear guidelines and policies concerning the recognition of prior learning. They should be open for alternative ways of obtaining learning outcomes, and should ensure a flexible learning process which enables students to complete their studies or degree.

Quality assurance

The quality assurance is the prerequisite to mutual trust. Quality assurance should be unbiased and enhance quality development instead of being a technocratic and static device. Quality assurance should not be about setting restrictive frameworks for institutions, or solely

about measuring the minimum level. Quality assurance systems must involve stakeholders at all levels and facilitate the development of a culture of quality and of continuous improvement.

Stakeholder participation

Students are stakeholders within the Bologna Process and should be able to participate at all levels. This does not function today due to the lack of financing of the participation of the stakeholders. Also the higher education institutions need to share the goals of the Bologna Process and be active participants on grass root level because they are the ones implementing the reforms. This requires a new level of participation within the organization of the Bologna Process.

Future of the Bologna Process

The undersigned unions do not believe in rankings of higher education institutions, because these inevitably present a narrow and one dimensional view of the diversity of institutions. Instead the unions welcome public access to unbiased information on higher education institutions. The unions see higher education institutions around Europe as equal, but different.

The unions demand that the Bologna Process must respect the institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The unions strongly believe that the content of the curricula must not be a part of the reforms that come with Bologna.

The Bologna process is a cooperative academic process. It is not about competitiveness. The unions oppose the introduction of the themes of institutional governance and funding to the Bologna process. The unions oppose marketing of education as a product and calls for more neutral information available to all. The unions reaffirm their strong belief that education and research should not be seen as a commodity, but as a public good, accessible and beneficial to all people and to the society at large.

In Reykjavik, November 2nd, 2008

Meginfelag Føroyskra Studenta (MFS) – Faroe Islands

Norsk Studentunion (NSU) - Norway

Suomen ylioppilaskuntien liitto (SYL) - Finland

Suomen ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijakuntien liitto (SAMOK) - Finland

Sveriges Förenade Studentkårer (SFS) - Sweden

Studentarad Haskola Islands (SHI) - Iceland

Bandalag íslenskra sérskólanema (BISN) - Iceland

Danske Studerendes Faellesråd (DSF) - Denmark

Organisationen af Grønlandske Studerende i Danmark (Avalak) - Greenland

Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit (EÜL) - Estonia

Latvijas studentu apvienība Student union of Latvia (LSA) - Latvia

Lietuvos studentų atstovybių sąjunga (LSAS) - Lithuania

Lietuvos studentų sąjunga (LSS) - Lithuania